

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY BONN

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 071495

DELIVER BLOCH 9 A.M. MARCH 29

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIN, PFOR, GE, US

SUBJECT: GDR CLAIMS: NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN CONFERENCE ON
JEWISH MATERIAL CLAIMS AGAINST GERMANY AND
COMMITTEE OF ANTIFASCIST RESISTANCE FIGHTERS

1. AS REPORTED IN BERLIN'S 544' AND CONFIRMED BY SAUL
KAGAN IN RECENT CONVERSATION WITH DEPARTMENT OFFICER,
EFFORTS BY CONFERENCE ON JEWISH MATERIAL CLAIMS AGAINST
GERMANY TO COMMENCE CONTACT WITH COMMITTEE OF ANTIFASCIST
RESISTANCE FIGHTERS HAVE NOT BEEN FRUITFUL. THIS WOULD
APPEAR TO BE IN DIRECT CONTRADICTION WITH AGREEMENT REACHED
BY US NEGOTIATORS WITH DR. SUESS DURING JULY, 1974 NEGOTIA-
TIONS THAT THE COMMITTEE WOULD BE PREPARED TO RECEIVE
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REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CONFERENCE AND TO COMMENCE

NEGOTIATIONS AT AN EARLY DATE.

2. DEPARTMENT OFFICERS MENTIONED THIS PROBLEM MARCH 27 TO AMBASSADOR SIEBER AND DCM ELM HERE. WHILE EMBASSY UNDOUBTEDLY WILL BE REPORTING DEPARTMENT'S COMMENTS TO EAST BERLIN, EMBASSY DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE A CLEAR

PICTURE OF DIMENSIONS OF THIS PROBLEM. SIEBER DID COMMENT THAT FERENCZ MEETING WITH DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF ANTIFASCIST COMMITTEE WAS NOT WELL PREPARED AND THAT RESULTS WERE THEREFORE LESS THAN SATISFACTORY. DEPARTMENT OFFICERS POINTED OUT THAT THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST IN MATTER, AND THAT IT WOULD NOT BE SURPRISING IF VISITING SENATORS RAISED IT WHILE THEY WERE IN EAST BERLIN.

3. SINCE EVEN DURING JULY 1974 NEGOTIATIONS GDR HAS NEVER APPEARED TO APPRECIATE FULLY POLITICAL PROBLEM POSED BY CLAIMS ISSUE, DEPARTMENT BELIEVES IT MIGHT BE PRODUCTIVE IF MEMBER OF CODEL-HUMPHREY-SCOTT MENTIONED MATTER TO GDR REP AT AMBASSADOR COOPER'S LUNCHEON MARCH 31. IF AMBASSADOR AGREES, EMBASSY SHOULD PROVIDE SENATOR WITH BRIEFING ON CLAIMS ISSUE AND NOTE THAT SINCE IT IS A DOMESTIC POLITICAL PROBLEM IN US A REFERENCE TO THIS ISSUE BY ONE OR MORE MEMBERS OF GROUP WITH GDR REP WOULD BE HELPFUL IN BRINGING HOME TO GDR IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO THIS QUESTION.

4. WE REALIZE THAT IN THE SHORT TIME AND PARTICULAR SOCIAL SITUATION AVAILABLE IT WILL NOT BE FEASIBLE FOR ANY SENATOR TO MAKE AN EXTENDED PRESENTATION TO GDR OFFICIALS, AND DEPARTMENT LEAVES IT TO AMBASSADOR COOPER'S JUDGMENT AS TO HOW MATTER CAN BEST BE HANDLED. THE FOLLOWING SUMMARIZES THE DEPARTMENT'S VIEWS ON THIS MATTER:

(A) US SIDE REGRETS APPARENT DELAY IN COMMENCEMENT OF DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN CONFERENCE ON JEWISH MATERIAL CLAIMS AND COMMITTEE OF ANTIFASCIST RESISTANCE FIGHTERS. WE ATTACH GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THESE TALKS WHICH WERE CONFIDENTIAL

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AGREED UPON WITH DR. SUESS DURING NEGOTIATIONS ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS IN JULY, 1974.

(B) PUBLIC OPINION IN US WOULD BE FAVORABLY INFLUENCED BY A SATISFACTORY SETTLEMENT BETWEEN TWO NON-GOVERNMENT GROUPS. CONVERSELY, FAILURE TO COME TO SOME SETTLEMENT IN A REASONABLE PERIOD OF TIME WOULD NOT BE UNDERSTOOD BY IMPORTANT SEGMENT OF US PUBLIC. USG WOULD

FIND FAILURE TO COME TO AGREEMENT REGRETTABLE SINCE SUCH
AGREEMENT WAS CLEAR INTENT OF OUR UNDERSTANDING WITH
DR. SUESS.

(C) OTHER CLAIMS MATTERS ARE COMPLEX AND IT WILL
TAKE SOME TIME FOR US TO PREPARE FOR NEGOTIATIONS FORESEEN
IN AGREED MINUTE. PRIVATE NEGOTIATIONS, HOWEVER, ARE
SEPARATE FROM GOVERNMENT LEVEL DISCUSSIONS AND ONE
DOES NOT DEPEND ON THE OTHER.

(D) WE WOULD WELCOME EARLY INDICATION FROM GDR OF
WILLINGNESS BY COMMITTEE OF ANTIFASCIST RESISTANCE
FIGHTERS TO MEET WITH CONFERENCE ON JEWISH MATERIAL CLAIMS
AGAINST GERMANY. KISSINGER

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